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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BUCHAREST 001181

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STATE DEPT FOR EUR/NCE - BILL SILKWORTH

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/24/2016

TAGS: PREL MARR PINS NATO RO

SUBJECT: ROMANIA SEEKS RELEASE OF NATO INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDS
FOR 3 AIRPORTS, NOT JUST ONE

Classified By: Amb. Nicholas Taubman for reasons 1.4 (B) & (D)

¶1. (C) Romanian MFA Director for NATO Affairs Mirela Maghiar relayed a demarche to PolOff on July 20 regarding Romania's request for U.S. support for NATO infrastructure funds to be released. She said Romania's proposal includes three locations -- Otopeni, Fetesti, and Mihail Kogalcieanu (MK) airports, but that the U.S. has opposed the release of prefinancing for two of those locations, preferring to direct NATO funds to the MK airport alone. She said NATO approved the 11 projects as eligible for funding under the NATO infrastructure projects for new NATO members. She stressed the strategic and operational importance of improving all three airports and requested that the U.S. analyze the issue and support unfreezing common funding for the other two airports. Maghiar added that President Basescu will likely raise this topic when he meets with President Bush on July ¶27.

¶2. (C) The text of the non-paper Maghiar delivered is below:

Begin Text:

NSIP Infrastructure Projects

- Romania - US agreement on US military facilities in Romania is a major pillar of bilateral strategic cooperation. NATO has included the Mihail Kogalcieanu Air Base in the package of Romania capabilities that could be funded through NATO common funds under the NATO Security Infrastructure Program (NSIP).

- This capability package also includes other projects of high interest for Romania at the Fetesti and Otopeni military airports:

- 7 projects to support deployment of NATO air defense forces in Fetesti military airport;
- 3 projects to support strategic air lift in Otopeni airport

- They have been selected by NATO's military authorities as projects of interest for the Alliance's missions and approved by the Allies as eligible for NSIP funding. However, the United States has constantly frozen the release of pre-financing funds for any other projects than those dedicated to the MK airport. US has stated, in the NATO Infrastructure Committee, its intention to refuse to contribute to NATO common funding at Otopeni and Fetesti related projects (from this Capability Package), based on the fact that these projects do not correspond to the US national interests.

- Romania attaches strong interest to the projects in Fetesti and Otopeni airports, whose modernization will also be in the US benefit. For NATO, it is a foregone conclusion. Our arguments are multifold:

- Operational: the projects in Fetesti and Otopeni will support the expeditionary niche capabilities Romania brings into NATO. They will also create a functional and modern platform for force projection, in support of both US and NATO expeditionary forces.

- Strategic: these projects will provide alternative facilities for US and NATO forces, complementary to MK, as well as support for the future US facilities at MK.

- At both Otopeni and Fetesti airports, Romania has invested in NATO compatible navigational aids (NAVAIDS).

- Nearby Otopeni airport, Romania has developed the necessary infrastructure for the maintenance of C130 aircraft (national and NATO). We consider that from both operational and economic reasons, this infrastructure should not be replicated at MK.

- At Fetesti airport, two analytical studies made by NATO Air Defense Cell have established that this airport has the optimum capability for air policing missions.

- Burden Sharing: these projects would be the first significant infrastructure projects developed with NATO common funding, since Romania joined NATO. So far, Romania has contributed with 8,077,378 Euro to NSIP during 2004-2005 and got mere 506,969 Euro - worth of NSIP investments. If all NSIP funding is channeled to MK, Romania loses the

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possibility of using 40 mil. Euro and will have to allot its own resources to cover these shortfalls.

- Moreover, financing these projects would have a positive impact on the Romanian public opinion. They would contribute to strengthening public support for NATO, including for Romania's contribution to NATO operations.

- In the spirit of Romania - US Strategic Partnership, so much strengthened during the war on terrorism, we would highly appreciate US support for unfreezing NSIP funds for projects of interests to Romania at the Fetesti and Otopeni airports. We strongly believe such military infrastructure projects would benefit both Romania and the United States. We kindly ask the United States to consider which projects could be selected for advanced funding, so that at least part of them be funded through NSIP.

- Given the presence of US facilities in Romania, bilateral cooperation on developing Romania's military infrastructure should also become a major component of our strategic partnership.

End Text
TAUBMAN